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Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007
Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education

Jamaica

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes

Compiled by:
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JAMAICA

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) programs

A. GENERAL INFORMATION, STATISTICS AND INDICATORS

Starting age of compulsory education (if applicable):

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) the compulsory education age range is 6-11 years.

1. ISCED 0 PROGRAMS (USUALLY, PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION)

(ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education)

1.1. National definition of ISCED 0 programs:

Early Childhood Education

1.2. Normative age group(s) covered by ISCED 0 programs:

3-5 years of age

1.3. ISCED 0 programs: statistics and indicators (*source: UIS*)

1.3.1. Enrolment:

	Percentage	Year
Gross enrolment ratio	92.5	2003/04
Net enrolment ratio	91.4	2003/04
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	<i><u>Not available</u></i>	

1.3.2. Enrolment ratio by age group (percentage, also including the first years of primary education when applicable):

Less than 3 years of age	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7
0.0	60.4	95.9 0.1(*)	98.5 3.0(*)	1.8 84.8(**)	0.0 100.0(**)

UIS estimation. (*) Enrolled in primary education. (**) Primary education enrolment ratio.

	Less than 3 years	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7
Primary	0.0	0.0	0.1	3.9	80.3	91.6
Early Childhood	0.0	70.2	99.4	99.8	3.0	0.02

Note: Data provided by the Ministry of Education (school year 2003/04). Discrepancies in the ratios for ages 5 and 6 may be as a result of the data from basic schools not being disaggregated to separate ages 5 and 6.

1.3.3. Teachers, 2003/04:

Total number of teachers	Of whom female (%)	Percentage of trained teachers (all)	Percentage of trained teachers (males)	Percentage of trained teachers (females)
6,925	98.1

Source: UIS.

	Total Number of Teachers	Of Whom Female (%)	Percentage of Trained Teachers (all)	Percentage of Trained Teachers (Males)	Percentage of Trained Teachers (Females)
Independent Schools (Basic Schools and Kindergarten)	6,344
Public Infant Schools & Departments	581	98.8	83.0	0.6	82.4

Source: Ministry of Education, data refer to 2003/04. (...) Not available.

1.3.4. Funding:

	Percentage
Public current expenditure per pupil as percentage of the Gross National Product per capita	4.76 (2004)

Source: UIS.

1.3.5. Main source(s) of financing: Not available

2. OTHER ECCE PROGRAMS

(Generally preceding ISCED 0 programs)

2.1. National definition of other ECCE programs:

See section B

2.2. Normative age group(s) covered by other ECCE programs:

See section B

2.3. Estimate number of children covered by other ECCE programs:

Approximately 153,200 children were enrolled in early childhood institutions in 2003/04 (not including data from day care centres).

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING ECCE PROGRAMS (INCLUDING ISCED 0)

3.1. Legislation concerning ECCE:

The Early Childhood Commission Act of March 2003 deals with the organizational arrangement of the Commission and the Early Childhood Act and Regulations of 2005—empower the Commission to regulate the operations of early childhood institutions. The Act will be supported by standards to guide continuous improvement in service delivery.

3.2. Official body/bodies in charge of supervision or coordination:

A Strategic Review of the Early Childhood Sector undertaken in 2000, recommended the establishment of a Commission with responsibility for the coordination and

monitoring of all Early Childhood services. This Commission, which has been established by an Act in 2003, should incorporate the Early Childhood Unit of the MOEYC which has responsibility for administering the early childhood education programme, based on the recommendations of the Task Force on Educational Reform.

3.3. Other entities involved in the provision (e.g. municipalities, local governments) and main types of providers (e.g. public, private, mixed, community-based, etc.):

The early childhood care and education programme is delivered through a network of over 3,000 institutions including day care centres, community-run basic schools, government infant schools and infant departments in primary and all-age schools, and kindergarten departments of privately-owned preparatory schools. Over 80% of preschoolers enrolled attend community operated basic schools and just under 20% are in Public Infant Departments and private centers which benefit from government subsidies for teachers salaries, class materials and school meals.

The basic schools that cater to approximately 80% of the total enrolment are thus central to the country's early childhood programme. Basic schools that satisfy minimum requirement stipulated by the MOEYC for operational subsidies are awarded recognition status. The others are classified as unrecognized basic schools. The teacher's salary subsidy provided by the Ministry—in partnership with the communities—is linked to the national minimum wage. To date, approximately 90 % of basic schools are recognized. All basic schools, however, are eligible for instructional supervision.

Parents pay school fees which contribute to the payment of teacher's salaries as well as school operation and maintenance. Each early childhood institution has a community management board responsible for the quality of its day to day operations.

3.4. Type of personnel involved:

The delivery of services to the sector involves care givers, early childhood practitioners as well as trained teachers. Education officers provide instructional supervision for the sector.

3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):

The Standards document indicates that the early childhood practitioners should have at least Level 1 training which is provided by the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET) of the HEART Trust. This training which is offered at different levels, leads to certification of the participants. It provides the competencies necessary for the delivery of the early childhood programme.

Preparation of teachers for early childhood education is also being undertaken in selected Teacher training institutions where participants obtain a diploma. In addition, a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Education) is being offered at one of the Teachers' Colleges. The programme is offered in association with the University of the West Indies.

3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:

The Ministry's Early Childhood Programme dates back to 1970 when the government of Jamaica adopted and added new dimensions to the successful Bernard Van Leer Foundation project which started in 1965 and was completed in 1975. Over the years a number of reforms/changes have taken place, some of which are outlined below.

Teacher training:

In an effort to improve the quality of teachers and enhance the delivery of the early childhood programme, the MOEC has embarked on the process of placing one trained teacher in each recognized Basic School with a minimum enrolment of one hundred children.

The Child Focus project with the National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET) developed national competency standards for certifying early childhood workers at three levels, from entry point to readiness for formal teacher training or other tertiary training. The standards were officially adopted by NCTVET in March 1999. This is being undertaken with a view to ensuring that early childhood practitioners are equipped with at least the minimum skills to deliver the programme.

Student assessment:

The Readiness Inventory of the National Assessment Programme (NAP), is administered to Grade 1 pupils. The main purpose of this inventory is to assist teachers in Grade 1 in knowing whether or not their pupils have entered with the prerequisite skills. The skills assessed are: motor co-ordination; visual discrimination; visual and auditory memory; figure ground; L-R orientation, receptive language, listening comprehension, number knowledge and auditory discrimination.

The Early Childhood Commission was established in recognition of the need for a long term vision and plan for a comprehensive and an integrated delivery of early childhood programs and services to facilitate the appropriate development of the young child. The purpose of the integrated approach to early childhood development is to establish complementarities between line ministries and agencies contributing to the development process of the child. In addition to facilitating optimal development, the integrated approach maximizes the use of limited resources by reducing duplication and fragmentation resulting in a more cohesive delivery of services.

3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:

Children in early childhood institutions benefit from the school feeding programme.

3.8. Special projects/programmes aiming at expanding or improving ECCE:

The Enhancement of Basic Schools Project and the Resource Centre Upgrading Projects are geared towards the upgrading of Resource Centres, developing relevant materials and equipment for the sector, training practitioners and implementing the revised curriculum starting with a pilot.

3.9. Information concerning the curriculum (if applicable) or the contents of ECCE programs

3.9.1. Objectives and aims:

The focus of the early childhood education programme is the development of the whole child and thus, the strategy employed is an integrated approach to programmes and service delivery. The goal of the programmes is “to ensure that children birth – six years old are provided with the opportunity for developmentally appropriate stimulating readiness programmes with emphasis on the affective, psychomotor and cognitive domains.”

3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:

The curriculum is eclectic in its approach to preparing children for formal education. It focuses on the affective, psychomotor and cognitive domains. According to the Education Act, a minimum of three hours must be provided in each school day for not less than five school days in each week.

3.9.3. Average number of hours per week and average amount of weeks per year:

Institutions at the early childhood level, like the other levels of the system, are expected to provide instruction for a minimum of 190 days per year.

3.10. Any other relevant and pertinent information

Not available

[Main Source: 4th International Meeting on Initial and Pre-school Education, Monterrey, Mexico, May 2004, co-sponsored by OAS.]

C. SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION REGARDING ECCE (TO BE COMPILED IN COLLABORATION WITH UNICEF OFFICES WHERE POSSIBLE)

4.1. Parenting programmes are usually addressed to parents and families of children less than 6 years of age. Please provide information about any parenting programmes in your country according to the table below:

Type of programme	Yes or No (note for each programme)	Please estimate the number of beneficiaries (if possible)
Parenting education through early learning centres and child care centres	YES (These tend to be ad hoc however)	There are approx. 3,000 such centres in Jamaica serving over 200,000 children
As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits	These tend to be ad hoc	
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development	YES	Over 2,000 parents (conservative estimate)
As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes	YES	Over 2,000 parents and approx 6,500 children (conservative estimate)
Media broadcast, such as <i>Sesame Street</i> , with media for and with children	ONE Radio Programme <i>Let's Talk Parenting</i>	Island wide coverage (Jamaica's total population is approximately 2.5 million persons)
Other (please specify)		

Are any of these programmes targeted specifically toward the vulnerable, poor, disadvantaged or excluded? If so, which ones? (Please provide/attach any additional and relevant information if available).

All are targeted to families at risk.

4.2. Is there a national-level system for monitoring children's development or school readiness prior to entering primary school?

Yes. It is called the Grade One Readiness Inventory (GRI)

4.3. Is there a policy on early childhood (ECCE, ECD, etc.) that has been accepted? If not, is there one under development?

There is a draft National Plan of Action for Early Childhood. As a part of its mandate, the Early Childhood Commission will be developing an EC Policy during 2006, in conjunction with other EC stakeholders.

Specific EC legislation now in existence includes the EC Act and Regulations (2005) and the EC Commission Act (2004). The Child Care and Protection Act includes all children up to the age of 17 plus.

[Information revised and additional data provided by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF, December 2005.]